REMARKS

Claims 1-30 were pending in the present application. Claims 2-30 have been canceled without prejudice and new claims 31-48 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1 and 31-48 are currently pending.   A marked-up version of the claims titled "Version Showing Changes Made" is attached as Appendix A.

The pending claims have been substantially copied from U.S. Patent Application Number US 2002/0076415 A1. Claim 1 corresponds substantially to claim 1 of the 2002/0076415 A1 application. Claim31-34 correspond substantially to claims 5-8 of the 2002/0076415 A1 application, respectively. Claims 35-40 correspond substantially to claims 10-15 of the 2002/0076415 A1 application, respectively. Claims 41-48 correspond substantially to claims 19-26 of the 2002/0076415 A1 application, respectively.

Applicants submit herewith (as Appendix B) for consideration by the Examiner, U.S. Patent Application Number 2002/0076415 A1 by Ou et al.

No new matter has been added. Support for the newly added claims can be found throughout the specification and claims as previously pending. For example, support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found at least at page 9, lines 11-24. Support for new claim 31 can be found at least at page 9. Support for new claim 32 can be found at least at page 9, line 27. Support for new claim 33 can be found at least at page 7, lines 5-10. Support for new claim 34 can be found at least at page 12, lines 19-20. Support for new claim 35 can be found at least at page 27, lines 19-21. Support for new claim 36 can be found at least at pages 25-28 and at page 12, lines 22-28. Support for new claim 37 can be found at least at page 26, lines 10-29. Support for new claim 38 can be found at least at page 28, lines 9-19. Support for new claim 39 can be found at least at page 27, lines 19-21. Support for new claim 40 can be found at least at page 28, lines 9-19. Support for new claim 41 can be found at least at page 20, lines 23-26. Support for
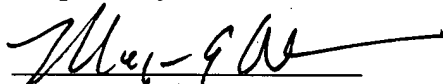
new claim 42 can be found at least at page 20, lines 23-26. Support for new claim 43 can be found at least at page 20, lines 23-26.   Support for new claim 44 can be found at least at page 30, lines 1-14. Support for new claim 45 can be found at least at page 28, lines 25-30. Support for new claim 46 can be found at least at page 29, lines 7-31. Support for new claim 47 can be found at least at page 29, lines 7-31. Support for new claim 48 can be found at least at page 29, lines 19-31.

Any amendments to and/or cancellation of the claims should in no way be construed as an acquiescence to any rejection. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the claims as originally filed in this or a separate application(s).

CONCLUSION

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with Applicants' Attorney would be helpful in expediting prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (617) 227-7400.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX A

VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE

An isolated [or recombinant] polypeptide [or fragment thereof encoded by a nucleic acid molecule derived from a] of the hepatitis C virus [, having at least one of the following characteristics:

      1) at least a portion of the polypeptide is encoded by a reading frame +1 or +2 relative to the standard hepatitis C virus open reading frame;

      2) at least a portion of the polypeptide is encoded by a reading frame corresponding to the reading frame of SEQ ID NO:1 in which the first nucleotide of SEQ ID NO:1 is the first nucleotide of a codon;

      3) at least a portion of the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence at least 60% identical to the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:2; and

      4) at least a portion of the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence encoded by a nucleic acid molecule which hybridizes under high stringency to the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:1] that is formed by expression of an overlapping open reading frame in the core protein gene sequence through a frame-shifting mechanism.